(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Price of Vanilla Beans

4359. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware about the sharp fall in production of "Vanilla" beans;

(b) what are the steps taken by Government to help the farmers; and

(c) whether Government propose to announce any floor price for "Vanilla"?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN) : (a) There is no fall in production of vanilla beans, given the fact that the area under vanilla cultivations steadily increasing.

(b) Steps taken by the Government to help the farmers include the following:—

* Planting materials are supplied at subsidized cost.
* Farmers are given assistance at the rate of Rs. 2500 for setting up on-farm vanilla curing units.
* Vanilla curing techniques are disseminated through CDs, printed booklets and training classes.
* Vanilla productivity awards are given to those who attain significant productivity levels.
* Spices Board assists and encourages vanilla growers for value added exports.
* Organic vanilla grower groups were sponsored to the recently held organic fair at Nuremberg to display their porducts and interact with potential buyers.
* Government of India (Ministry of Agriculture) is implementing a Central Sector Scheme on "Macro Management in Agriculture

supplementation/Complementation of States' Effort through Work Plan" including a programme of Integrated Development of Spices which includes vanilla. Under this programme, assistance is provided for production and distributionof quality planting material, large scale multiplication of planting material, field demonstration and training of farmers.

(c) No, Sir.

Talks for enhancing Indo-Pak Trade and Economic Cooperation

4360. DR. AKHILESH DAS:
SHRIMATI SUKHBUNS KAUR:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether during the recent visit of the Indian delegation headed by the Union Minister of External Affairs, any talks for enhancing Indo-Pak trade and economic cooperation were held in Islamabad; and

(b) if so, the outcome thereof, indicating the agreement of understanding reached as a result thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN) : (a) and (b) the issue of Indo-Pak trade and cooperation was discussed during the visit of Minister of External Affairs, Shri K. Natwar Singh to Pakistan from February 15-17, 2005. Both leaders stated that they looked forward to the first meeting of the Joint Study Group (JSG) on Trade and Economic Cooperation at the level of Commerce Secretaries. The meeting of the JSG took place on February 22-23, 2005 in New Delhi. the JSG constituted two Working/ Sub-Groups on Customs Cooperation & Trade Facilitations and Non Tariff Barriers. The Terms of References (TOR) for the Sub-Groups were mutually agreed upon. During the visit of Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf to India from April 16-18, 2005, Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh underlined the need to multiply beneficial linkages of trade and transit.